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MARKETING GEORGIA WATERMELONS

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Early in June Georgia watermelon growers and shippers begin sending early summer melons to distant markets. Many workers are needed to gather the melons in the fields, and for loading into railroad cars and large trailer-trucks for quick transportation to market. Railroad cars are loaded at convenient sidings in the producing areas and at state-operated farmers' markets. Large trailer-trucks are loaded at the farmers' markets and at country loading points. Several loading methods are used, depending largely upon the variety of melons being shipped. These USDA photographs were taken in south Georgia for the Agricultural Marketing Service.



N-28092-- Producer trucks with freshly harvested watermelons await buyers at Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market. Variety of melons in these trucks is the rather new Charleston Gray, now grown on a commercial scale.



N-28089-- At watermelon time, farmers' market at Cordele, Ga., is one of the busiest in the State. Growers sell most of their melons to carlot buyers. The melons are loaded into trailer-trucks and rail cars for shipment to distant markets.



N-28079-- Pick-up trucks of watermelon growers await their turn for loading into railroad cars at the Cordele, Ga., farmers' market. Both ventilated box cars and refrigerator cars are used in shipping melons from Georgia and other southeastern States. Hatch covers in the refrigerator cars are left open for ventilation.



N-28091-- Loading crew transfers Charleston Gray watermelons from field truck into rail refrigerator car at Cordele, Ga. Because of the bulk of insulated sides refrigerator cars hold about 10 percent fewer melons than the conventional 36-foot ventilated box cars.

*Magazines and newspapers may obtain glossy prints of any of these photographs from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Others may purchase prints (8 x 10) at \$1.00 each from the same address.*



N-28093--A fully loaded field truck of Blackstone variety melons awaiting sale at the Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market. A moderate proportion of melons sold at this market during the marketing season are of the Blackstone variety, with the greater proportion being Charleston Gray.



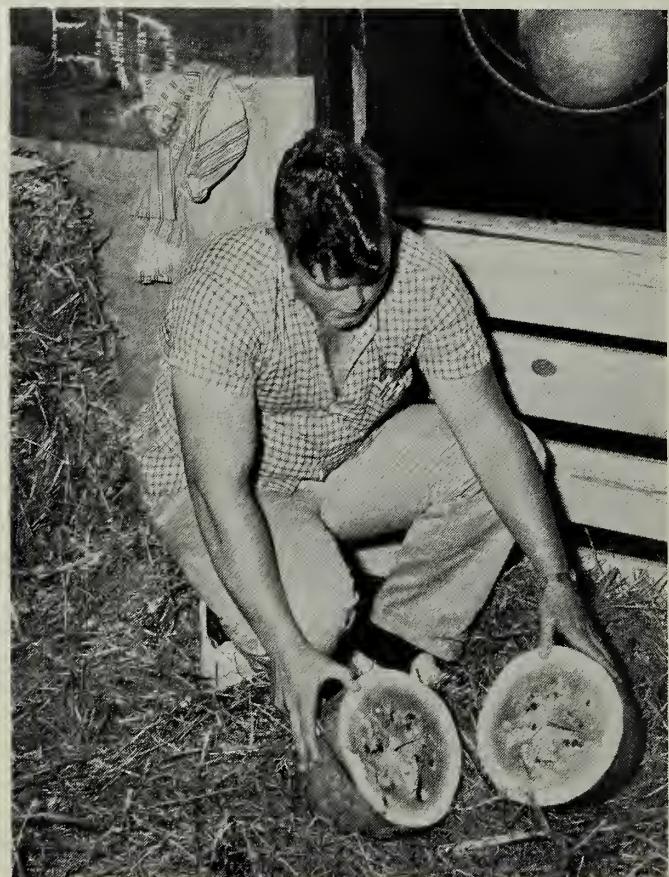
N-28109--Loading crew at railroad siding in Georgia transfers Blackstone watermelons from field truck into ventilated box railroad car. Melons for this shipment each average 33 pounds. When railroad car is loaded it will contain approximately 800 melons.



N-28086--Federal-State inspector checks weight of Charleston Gray melon during loading of trailer-truck at Cordele, Ga. Distant buyer had requested official inspection of this shipment in order to be assured of uniform weight and U. S. No. 1 quality.



N-28111--As loading crew transfers melons from truck to rail car, a Federal-State inspector, shown with hand on scales, checks weight of melons. Average weight of melons is shown on official inspection certificates.



N-28082--A Federal-State inspector at the Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market examines interior of Charleston Gray melon to determine if hollow heart is present. If present, he reports in the official inspection certificate the percentage of the car load damaged by this defect.



N-28095--Fields in south Georgia with good sandy loam soil are the State's chief producers of watermelons. In this field ripe Charleston Gray melons have been picked and stacked along a truck lane to await hauling to railroad sidings or farmers' markets. As other melons ripen they also will be stacked along the truck lane.

N-28115--Experienced field workers known locally as "pul-lers" can quickly spot ripe melons of suitable shipping size. As shown here, field workers use knives to sever melons from vines. Melon being severed from vine is of the Black-stone variety.



N-28097--Field workers load Charleston Gray watermelons into field truck for hauling to railroad siding. These workers are itinerant laborers who followed the watermelon harvesting season from Florida into Georgia.

N-28114--Another view of field workers loading watermelons into field truck. Melons in this field are of the Blackstone variety.



N-28080--Workers at Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market, set lining in ventilated rail box car as safeguard against shipping damage. Ends of car are being lined with excelsior-filled pads and sides with kraft paper.



N-28085--Charleston Gray melons being loaded in this trailer-truck average 28 pounds. Worker piles melons lengthwise in alternate rows. Truck when loaded holds about 1,300 melons.



N-28076--Watermelons are being loaded crosswise, five layers deep, in this 36-foot ventilated rail box car at Cordele, Ga. Research by USDA and cooperating agencies shows melons loaded by this method suffer less damage in transit than those loaded lengthwise.



N-28075--Fully loaded 36-foot ventilated rail box car with Charleston Gray melons that average 34 pounds each. These melons have been loaded by the conventional lengthwise method instead of the newer crosswise method.



N-28074--Wooden barriers for doorway areas in rail box cars permits full loading. This car of Charleston Gray melons is on rail siding at Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market, one of the heaviest melon shipping points in Georgia.



N-28072--Charleston Gray watermelons averaging 32 pounds per melon, piled four deep, crosswise, in doorway area of rail car at Cordele, Ga., State farmers' market. Rows of melons are alternated during loading in order to distribute the weight of melons in top rows.



N-28088--The crosswise-loading method was followed in loading these 30- to 35-pound Charleston Gray melons in railroad refrigerator car. Straw packed between layers of melons gives added protection against damage during transit.